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Alliance Formed to Conserve Pollinators

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> *"Humanity, for its own sake, must attend to the forgotten pollinators and their countless dependent plant species."*
> – E.O. Wilson

Recent studies show overwhelming evidence that wild pollinators are declining around the world. Most species have already experienced a shrinking of range while some have suffered or face the imminent risk of total extinction. The ranks of pollinators are being thinned, not just by habitat reduction and other familiar agents of impoverishment, but also by the disruption of the delicate "biofabric" of interactions that bind ecosystems together.

Managed and feral European honey bees throughout the U.S. and other countries, such as France and Germany, are experiencing major population declines as a result of introduced parasitic mites, habitat destruction, food loss, pesticide misuse and bad weather. In the U.S., competition from non-native species — such as the Africanized honey bee — also is threatening bee populations.

Although farmers, foresters, and others are working to confront the problems, disturbances such as these have contributed to a loss of more than 25 percent of the nation's honey bee colonies since 1990. The demise of bee populations can lead to serious disruptions including impacts to the national economy, crop production and other broad ecosystem effects.

A majority of the crops grown in the U.S. are entomophilous (pollinated by insects) and are dependent on bees for pollination. In recent decades, the honey bee, the most widely available and easily managed generalist pollinator, has played a vital and dominant role in the pollination of entomophilous crops. However, research is demonstrating that bee species differ in their effectiveness as pollinators of particular crops.

Some crops are better pollinated by various bumble bee species or solitary bees rather than by honey bees. Optimum crop pollination only can be achieved if the appropriate pollinator species is available to visit the flowers. Therefore, crop pollinator diversity is the key to healthy and resilient agricultural production.

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Changes in land use and agricultural and apicultural practices have caused declines in indigenous wild and managed bee populations in the U.S. These declines are taking place at a time when consumers are demanding crop diversification and high quality produce. The importance of maintaining and managing pollinator diversity in agro-ecosystems cannot be overlooked if the U.S. wants to efficiently sustain its agricultural production and protect the economy.

Conservation Needs

In order to effectively protect pollinator species — be they managed or wild, native or introduced — we need to develop policies and legislation to protect pollinators, reduce pesticide use, and preserve pollinator habitats. We also need to conduct research and monitor pollinators, especially pollinators of endangered plants, and foster environmental awareness.

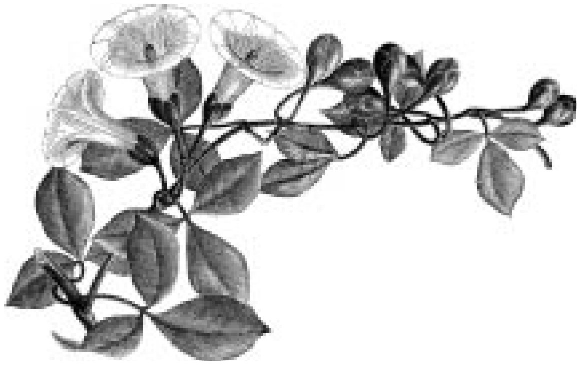
Currently, no policies exist to protect pollinators or their habitats. Legislation needs to be enacted that protects threatened ecological relationships, similar to the policies that protect endangered species. Pollinator recovery plans need to be incorporated into these policies. Funding also needs to be appropriated to study plant-pollinator relationships, including life-history analyses, and the ecological/economic role of pollinators and their pollen or nectar sources.

Maintaining wild pollinators for crop production requires setting aside habitats or "greenbelt" areas near agricultural fields. However, creating new habitat is not a substitute for protecting the original habitat. Managing valuable habitat that already exists should be the highest priority.

To encourage native wild pollinators, some farmers maintain native wild plant species near their agricultural fields. Because many pollinators are not limited to one immediate area, legislation needs to recognize and protect "nectar corridors" used by migrating pollinators like the monarch butterfly, hummingbirds and bats. Some legislation might require international agreements.

The economic burden of reduced crop yields and increased production costs resulting from honey bee declines has been estimated at $5.7 billion a year. A lack of understanding about pollinator biology, however, makes it difficult to accurately calculate agricultural loses due to decreasing pollinator populations. More information is needed on the effect of pollinator diversity and abundance on crop yields. Researchers also need to study the sequence of events from foraging until crop harvest.

In the U.S., we rely on a single, introduced, generalist pollinator — the European honey bee — to carry out most agricultural pollination. Surprisingly, no statistics are available describing the role that biology, weather, and the cessation of honey bee price support programs have played on the decline of managed honey bee colonies since 1986. This is distressing considering that crops that may not require pollination for fiber or vegetable harvests may require pollination to produce the seed crop. Some crops that do not require pollination, such as cotton, can, nevertheless, produce improved yields and quality when pollinated.

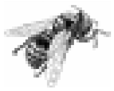


Designing conservation plans for rare and endangered plants is made difficult by the paucity of information on plant pollinators. Pollinators only account for one in every eight species on the federal endangered species list. To effectively design recovery plans for endangered plant species and protect pollinators, we need to study the relationship between pollinators and endangered plants.

Research also needs to be conducted to determine critical habitats that support listed plant species. Additional programs that monitor and collect information on the demographics of federally - and state-listed plants, pollination, seed set, and dispersal also are important.

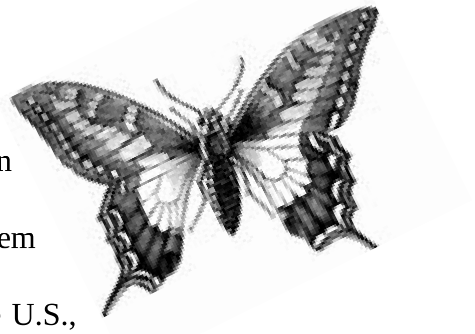
Other research and monitoring programs should include multi-year assessments of sub-lethal and lethal pesticide and herbicide effects on wild pollinator populations in and near croplands. Pesticide impact studies on pollinator faunas also need to be refined.

Alliance Formed



In the fall of 2002, over 60 organizations got together to form the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC). Their mission is to encourage the health of resident and migratory pollinating animals in North America.

The major goal of this alliance of pollinator researchers, conservation and environmental groups, private industry, and state and federal agencies is to develop and implement an action plan to:
* Coordinate local, national, and international action projects in the areas of pollinator research, education and awareness, conservation and restoration, policies and practices, and special partnership initiatives;
* Facilitate communication among stakeholders, build strategic coalitions, and leverage existing resources; and
* Demonstrate a positive measurable impact on the populations and health of pollinating animals within five years.



Since its founding, the NAPPC has been instrumental in focusing attention on the plight of pollinators and the need to protect them throughout the tri-national region comprised of the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. Two such efforts were the NAPPC Strategic Planning Conferences at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC. These two conferences resulted in an ambitious but vitally important and scientifically sound blueprint for pollinator protection (www.nappc.org).

Conclusion

The consequences to humanity that would result from destroying pollinators are immeasurable. Pollinator conservation also has an important stake in global agricultural and environmental sustainability. It is extremely important that apiculturalists expand their horizons to embrace the importance of other pollinators such as bats, birds, and butterflies in agriculture and in wildlife.

Biologists, ecologists, agriculturalists, conservationists, and the citizens of the world also need to recognize the importance of pollination and the adverse effects of habitat destruction, poisonings, diseases, and competition from alien species. We all need to join together in the new spirit of global environmental sustainability and the conservation of biodiversity.

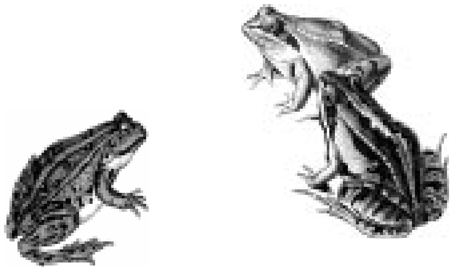
Heinz Center Issues Landmark Report On State of the Nation’s Ecosystems

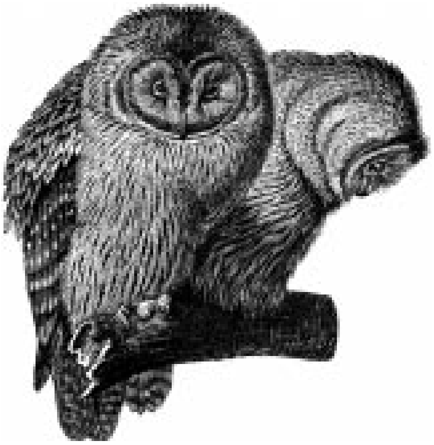
A new environmental study identifies major gaps in what is known about the nation’s lands, waters, and living resources and proposes periodic reporting of key indicators that will inform and influence policy discussions for generations to come.

The highly anticipated report by The H. John Heinz III Center for Science, Economics and the Environment is a succinct and comprehensive - yet unbiased and scientifically sound - examination of the current state of the nation’s lands, waters, and living resources. An unprecedented collaboration among nearly 150 experts from government, business, environmental organizations, and academia, the study identifies indicators and reports the best available data on conditions and trends.

The State of the Nation’s Ecosystems: Measuring the Lands, Waters, and Living Resources of the United States presents a compelling argument for reporting environmental indicators, much as key data are reported to help gauge the state of the national economy.

The report provides indicators for the nation as a whole and for its coasts and oceans, forests, farmlands, fresh waters, grasslands and shrublands, and urban and suburban areas. For each of these systems, the study reports on ten key characteristics of ecosystems that should be tracked over time, and, where the data are available, it describes current conditions and trends. The ten categories, characterized by about 100 indicators in all, are:





* Ecosystem extent
* Fragmentation and landscape pattern
* Building blocks of life
* Contaminants
* Physical conditions
* Plants and animals
* Biological communities
* Plant growth and productivity
* Production of food and fiber and use of water
* Recreation and other services

Participants in the study included representatives of industry and environmental organizations, elected and appointed leaders from local, state and federal government, and scholars. Nine federal agencies and thirteen corporations and foundations funded the project, which was commissioned by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. It calls for annual updates and a revised edition every five years.

The State of the Nation’s Ecosystems is published by Cambridge University Press and is also available in full at www.heinzctr.org/ecosystems.

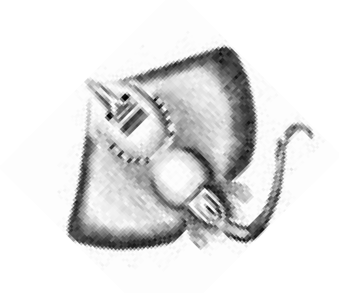
CGBD WORKING GROUPS

Climate and Energy

An October conference call of the Climate and Energy Funders Group considered litigation as a strategic tool to accelerate the transition from fossil fuels. Guest speakers outlined various litigation campaigns and projects underway in the U.S. and internationally. Anuja Mendiratta from the San Francisco Foundation (SFF) also reported on the SFF's role as a recipient and re-granter of consent decree money from air quality litigation.

In November, the Climate and Energy Funders will join with the Sustainable Consumption and Production Funders in a conference call on foreign oil dependence, U.S. energy consumption, and related grantmaking opportunities.

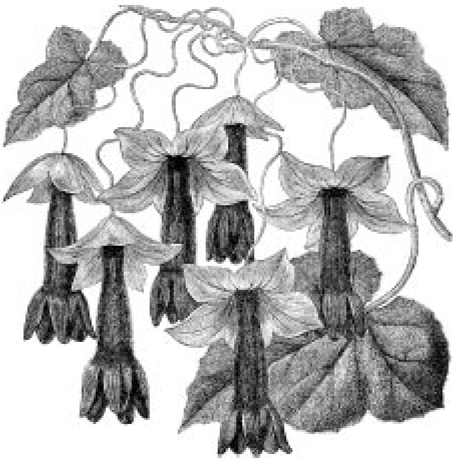
The Climate and Energy funders are planning a face-to-face meeting in tandem with or immediately following the Environmental Grantmakers Association federal and international policy briefings in Washington, DC in early February 2003.



Marine Conserv ion

The Marines will be convening their annual winter meeting on March 2-7 in La Paz, Baja California. The meeting will include a field trip to see the whales at San Ignacio Lagoon.

A few of the suggested topics for the meeting include:
* Marine protected areas;
* Aquaculture, including tuna "ranching" and shrimp farming;
* Campaigns; and
* Fisheries management, impacts of trawling, and fisheries certification.

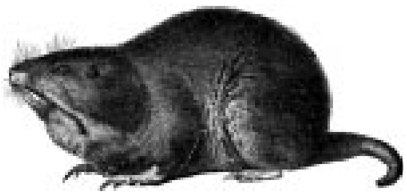


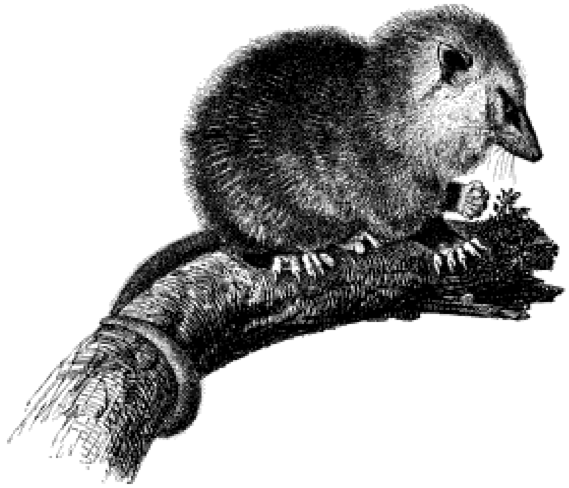
Forest Conservation

The *Public Forest and Lands* sub-group will be hosting a post-election briefing on December 5-6, addressing the following general topics:

* Review of recent changes to regulations and management policies regarding federal lands and the defense of the nation's bedrock environmental laws and regulations;
* Analysis of the results of the November Congressional elections and a discussion of the implications of Congressional changes for 2003 and 2004 administrative actions and legislation; and
* Discussion of the agenda for the public lands conservation community for the coming two years.

The *Sustainable Forestry Funders* are beginning to make plans for their annual winter meeting, typically convened in mid-January. The meeting is usually held in New York City, but in 2003 it will be held in conjunction with a meeting of the Southeast Forest Funders at a location yet to be determined. In addition to discussing worldwide developments in sustainable forestry and certification, the two-day meeting will focus on the daunting challenges to forest and biodiversity conservation in the Southeast.





Health and Environmental Funders Network (HEFN)

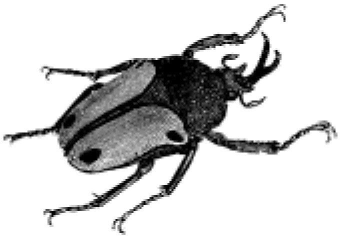
A recent Health & Environment Funders (HEFN) conference call focused on the emergence — with support from several HEFN funders — of a new network of environmentally health affected groups, concerned health professionals, funders, environmental advocates, and others. The Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE, pronounced “chay”) is a nonpartisan partnership network working to further knowledge, action and cooperation regarding environmental contributors to disease. Among CHE’s activities is a Science and Health Professionals Working Group undertaking to translate and distill information regarding links between specific illnesses or conditions and environmental factors.

More information about CHE is available on the web at www.cheforhealth.org. For more information about HEFN, contact Kathy Sessions via email to hefn@aol.com.

MEMBER NEWS

Robert B. Wallace, founder of the Wallace Global Fund, died on October 10 of complications due to a stroke. From 1948 to 1973, Mr. Wallace was Chief Executive Officer of Hy-Cross Hatcheries, a subsidiary of Pioneer Hi-Bred International, an agricultural genetics firm founded by his father. In 1973, he became national co-chairman of the Population Crisis Committee (now Population Action International), focused on raising awareness about the damaging impact of unchecked population growth on food production and the environment.

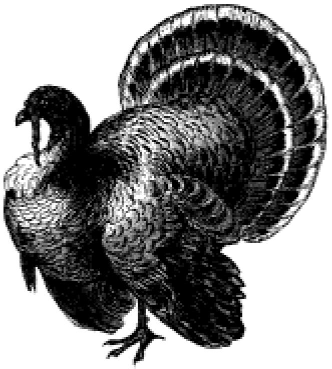
Mr. Wallace was a founder of the Council of Sponsors of Worldwatch Institute, and served on the board of Planned Parenthood/World Population, the Executive Committee of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and the board of directors of Pioneer Hi-Bred International.



Kay Treakle has joined the C.S. Mott’s Environment Program and will work with Sandra Smithey on Mott’s grantmaking on reform of international finance and trade. She comes to Mott after working with the Bank Information Center (BIC) since 1992, where she was most recently the Executive Director. Kay held a number of positions at BIC, in particular, she created and managed BIC’s Latin America and Caribbean Program and helped to launch the Latin America and Caribbean Network on Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs). Before working at BIC, Kay was the national campaign director for Greenpeace, where she worked in senior management and program coordination positions for 15 years.

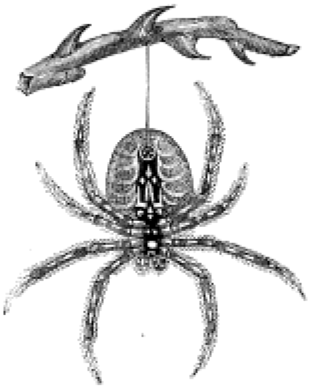
Jeanne Sedgwick, the current Conservation Program Director at the Packard Foundation, has decided not to continue in this capacity and is on leave through late 2002. Under her direction for more than a decade, the Foundation's Conservation Program has developed into one of the leading philanthropic supporters of conservation work in North America and across the Pacific. Jeanne is currently in conversation with the Foundation regarding the nature of her ongoing role.

Jim Leape has been named to lead the consolidation of the Packard Foundation's Conservation and Science Program and will direct the combined programs in 2003. Jim joined the Foundation in June 2001. Previously, he was Executive Vice President of World Wildlife Fund (WWF), overseeing WWF's conservation programs. He has also been a law professor at the University of Utah and the University of Colorado, and a lawyer with the United Nations Environment Programme, the National Audubon Society, and the U.S. Department of Justice.



Bruce Lourie has been named as Executive Director of the Richard Ivey Foundation. Bruce brings with him a wealth of experience in the environmental field, a key long-term funding focus of The Richard Ivey Foundation, together with a background in health information technology, currently a second area of focus of the Foundation. In addition to being a partner in the well-respected consulting firm, Lourie & Love Inc., Bruce has served for approximately ten years as Program Coordinator of the environmental program of the Laidlaw Foundation, another leading Canadian foundation. He has also played a leadership role in the founding of the Canadian Environmental Grantmakers' Network, and is a founder of the Sustainability Network, an organization dedicated to building capacity in the voluntary sector.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Nov. 6-9. National Network of Forest Practitioners (Pray, MT). Contact: info@nnfp.org.

Nov. 17-20. Defenders of Wildlife 4th Annual Conference. Contact: Yvonne Borresen, (202) 789-2844 x315.

Dec. 1-5. International Wildlife Management Congress (Christchurch, New Zealand). Contact: wildlife@cont.canterbury.ac.nz.

Dec. 3-4. Forest Health: Identification and Management of Forest Insects and Diseases. (Eugene, OR). Contact: Richard Zabel, (503) 226-4562 or richard@westernforestry.org.

Dec. 16-18. Sudden Oak Death Science Symposium – The State of Our Knowledge (Monterey, CA). Contact: Joni Rippee, (510) 642-0095 or rippee@nature.berkeley.edu.

Feb. 19-21, 2003. Annual Meeting of Grantmakers in Health (Los Angeles, CA). Contact: www.gih.org.

Mar. 26-28, 2003. North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference (Winston-Salem, NC). Contact: Richard McCabe, (202) 371-1808 or www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org.

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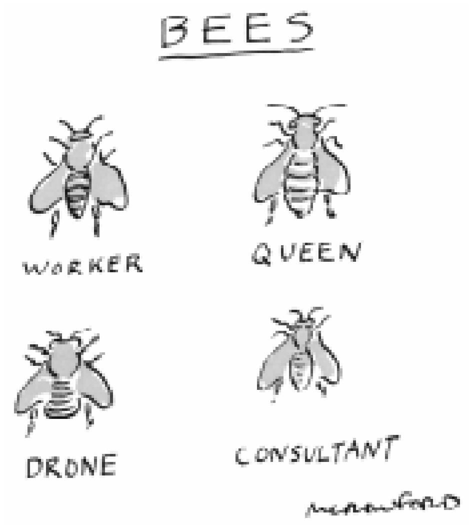

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